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AUTHOR Green, Wanda Jean; Fleming, Margaret
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ABSTRACT

To provide information for decision making related to competency testing in reading, the Cleveland School District developed a working paper for staff discussion. This paper presents information about the varied aspects of a competency testing program which will use locally developed test questions and be implemented in response to a Board of Education policy and a State mandate requiring such programs, and as a requirement for achieving compliance with a Federal Court Order for implementation of educational improvements in a district-wide desegregation plan. Drawing upon the performance of Cleveland students in a May 1982 pilot testing with a commercially produced test, the use of test data for improvement of student performance in reading is demonstrated. Contents include: advantages and disadvantages of competency testing, potential legal problems, expected outcomes, program implementation, major program elements, personnel involvement, progress, problems, remediation, district performance, requirements for graduation, how a competency test works, reporting to parents, and tables indicating the least able performance by Cleveland students on the May 1982 pilot test. (Author/PN)

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- WORKING PAPER -

THE CLEVELAND COMPETENCY TEST IN READING

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- by -

Wanda Jean Green
Margaret Fleming

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Cleveland Public Schools
1380 East Sixth Street
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January 1983

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Abstract

To provide information for decision making related to competency testing in reading, the Cleveland School District developed a working paper for staff discussion.

The paper presents information about the varied aspects of a competency testing program which will use locally developed test questions and be implemented not only in response to a Board of Education newly approved policy and a State mandate requiring such programs, but as a requirement for achieving compliance with a Federal Court Order for implementation of educational improvements in a district-wide desegregation plan.

Drawing upon performance of Cleveland students in a May 1982 pilot testing with a commercially produced test, the paper demonstrates the use of such test data for improvement of student performance in reading.

WORKING PAPER

THE CLEVELAND COMPETENCY TEST IN READING

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THE CLEVELAND COMPETENCY TEST IN READING

Effective September 1983, the Cleveland Public Schools will administer and use a competency test in reading for all students in grades 1 to 9. The goal of the test is to improve student achievement in reading.

What is a Competency Test?

A competency test in reading tests what a teacher teaches in reading to see if students have mastered the skills taught. To use a competency test in reading, the school district will have to define reading skills, successfully teach these skills and appropriately measure them. The test will show which specific reading skills students have mastered or not mastered for each grade. The outcomes of the test for a given student are two-fold:

1. A student does or does not know a skill.
2. A student does or does not know enough skills to continue to the next grade.

The outcomes of the test for the school district and Cleveland community are three-fold:

1. Students who master the test pass on to the next grade.
2. Students who do not master the test will be provided with an opportunity to learn the specific skills which they did not master on the test, prior to the being retained in their grades when school opens the next Spetember.
3. Students who do not master the test remain in the same grades.

What are the Advantages of a Competency Test?

The competency test in reading will:

1. Indicate a way to determine what reading skills students have learned as a result of teaching;
2. Permit a teacher to determine specifically what students do or do not know about a subject, such as reading;
3. Provide remedial programs and procedures to help students master what they did not know on the test;

4. Permit a school district to set standards for teachers and students in reading;

5. Provide a system for notifying parents of their child's specific mastering of skills in reading;

6. Provide the district with information about reading strengths and weaknesses to use to improve reading, one of the Basic Skills;

7. Generate a non-discriminatory curriculum in reading because it requires that all Cleveland schools teach identified reading skills to all students at a given grade level.

What are Some of the Disadvantages of Competency Testing?

Disadvantages include the following.

A. Unacceptable performance levels for the tests and the specific teaching goals serve to lower reading performance.

B. Legal issues associated with Competency Testing could become problems because of

   1. Racial/sexual discriminatory test questions;

   2. Inadequate phase-in period for the program;

   3. Reliability and validity concerns about the tests;

   4. Mis-match of the test with instructional objectives or teaching goals;

   5. Provision of inadequate remedial instruction.

C. The possibility that the minimum skills become the maximum skills required in a grade.

Let us look at one of these major disadvantages--unacceptable performance levels for the tests and the specific teaching goals. What are acceptable performance levels for an instructional objective and for the test?

Last May, when a reading competency test from a nationally recognized test publisher was given to Cleveland students in grades 1 to 9, a student had to answer 3 questions out of 3 to demonstrate mastery of a reading skill. For the test now being developed, a student will have to answer 3 questions out of

4 to demonstrate mastery of a skill.

The performance level for mastery of the objectives of a particular grade will have to be determined in addition to the performance level for mastery of each reading skill as has been explained above (3 out of 4 questions). Recommendation by a consultant for the school district is that the required mastery level for each grade be set at 90% of the reading objectives prescribed for that grade. This will mean that students will have to demonstrate mastery of 90% of all grade level reading objectives in order to pass to the next grade. The 90% mastery requirements is the level of performance necessary to pass the competency test.

Therefore, in grades 1 to 9, using the current pool of reading objectives, a student would have to master during the school year 1983-1984:

- 42 of the proposed 47 objectives in grade 1;
- 50 out of 55 in grade 2;
- 47 out of 52 in grade 3;
- 37 out of 41 in grade 4;
- 25 out of 28 in grade 5;
- 27 out of 30 in grade 6;
- 30 out of 33 in grade 7;
- 30 out of 33 in grade 8;
- 24 out of 27 in grade 9.

Those students not demonstrating 90% mastery of the grade level objectives would be given an opportunity to re-learn the skills related to the reading objectives which have not been mastered. If the student did not master the reading skills and subsequently pass the test, the student would be retained in his/her present grade in September 1984.

What are Potential Legal Problems Associated with Competency Testing?

Over 40 states in the union have implemented Competency Testing programs. Some of these programs have stimulated court suits. Three areas where the courts have taken exception to the tests involve test construction and the match of the tests to instruction. The issues are:

1) Racial/sexual bias in the test

2) Validity - Does the test test what it says it tests?
Reliability - Does the test test what it says it test consistently?

3) Matching the test with the objectives or teaching goals.

The courts have ruled against tests that produce higher failure rates for minority children than for majority children. Test questions must also meet non-discriminatory standards. Such questions, for example, must not contain offensive language or situations or sterotyped presentations conveying negative judgments about racial or ethnic groups. Question material must give fair and balanced treatment of both sexes. If these problems occur in Cleveland in the May 1983 Pilot Tests, the school district must start all over in constructing the tests. This will be done!!.

Where teachers have not been involved in the development of the teaching objectives and/or the writing of the test questions, the courts have often disapproved.

In the Summer of 1982, a select group of Cleveland teachers wrote the first set of teaching objectives for grades 1 to 9.

In October 1982, all affected teachers (1400) in grade 1-9 were asked to review and critique the teaching goals for their grade level. In addition, teachers were asked to submit potential questions or additional objectives for the test. These data were submitted during October and November 1982 to the Division of Research and Analysis.

The process of matching the test with the teaching goals will

be further analyzed after the administration of the second pilot in May 1983.

The issues of reliability and validity are technical words that all test publishers must consider in the preparation of a test. The test must test what it says it tests and it must do it in a consistent manner.

Another area that has generated lawsuits is an inadequate phase-in period.

An inadequate phase-in period means that the district did not educate, communicate and inform staff, students, parents, community members and businessmen about what a competency test is, how it works, why it is done and what can be expected if the test is implemented?

The Cleveland Public Schools started the discussion of the Competency Testing programs with the staff in January 1982.

These discussions resulted in a commercially implemented test in May 1982 that permitted principals to be in-serviced in April 1982, students to be tested in May 1982, and parents to receive their first reports in June 1982. All of this was done to begin to communicate what competency testing programs are about. No penalties for failures were ever suggested or implemented in this first effort.

Beginning in September 1982, on direction from the Deputy Superintendent, Dr. Wanda Jean Green and Dr. Margaret Fleming were assigned responsibilities for informing the community about the competency testing program in the Cleveland Public Schools.

Since September 1982, they have inserviced all cluster directors, subject matter directors, reading supervisors, principals and cluster level staff. The cluster level staff received training to assist with the education of the community, parent and staff groups. All trained

staff are in the process of explaining the competency testing program to parent meetings, faculty meetings, student and community groups.

Any one wishing to have a presentation for their group may call and reserve their date and time for an orientation meeting on Competency Testing.

Call: 574-8403 or 574-8206.

During the 1982-83 school year and continuing until May 1984, orientation meetings will be given on request.

The phase-in period for the Cleveland Public Schools began in January 1982 and will continue until May 1984, when the first Cleveland Competency Test in Reading with penalties will be administered.

What are expected outcomes of a Reading Competency Testing Program?

The effective operation of the Reading Competency Testing Program will ensure that every graduate of the Cleveland Public Schools has demonstrated competency in reading. Graduates will be able to take their places in colleges, universities, technical institutes and other post-secondary educational programs. They will be able to take jobs with greater confidence for success in business and industry.

It is also anticipated that a major positive impact of the Reading Competency Testing Program will be reflected in significant improvement of student performance on standardized achievement tests in reading and academic disciplines. Such an outcome will be consistent with experiences of other school systems throughout the country that have established competency testing programs. Portland, Oregon, for example, has one of the most outstanding programs in the country. Through careful description of objectives and design of test questions, the program has improved achievement in basic skills. Denver, Colorado , which has maintained its competency program since the 1960's, has improved student proficiencies in the basic skills.

The Reading Competency Testing Program is designed to develop a method for monitoring each student's progress in reading. This monitoring process by providing information about student performance levels on specific reading skills will help classroom teachers diagnose students' needs and prescribe methods to aid students in mastering the reading skills. The analyses of students' performance will suggest supportive activities for both teachers and parents to help students' progress.

Why will the Cleveland School District Implement a Competency Testing Program in Reading?

In August 1982, a resolution was presented to the Board of Education regarding implementation of a Competency Testing Program in Reading.

Major reasons for implementing this program include:

A. To improve student achievement in basic skills, such as reading, mathematics and writing;

B. To comply with the State of Ohio mandate to implement a competency testing program in reading, mathematics and writing by September 1984.

C. To assist in development of more effective schools by establishing common objectives and instructional requirements in reading in all schools of the district;

D. To implement the Remedial Order of the United States District Court which, in part, requires an affirmative reading program, a non-discriminatory testing program, abandonment of segregative tracking practices and adherence to staff development indicators of effectiveness in human relations activities;

E. To encourage and support parents' involvement in the schools;

F. To involve the Cleveland Community and Business Sector in improvement of the schools' instructional program in reading;

G. To establish a non-discriminatory curriculum in reading;

H. To provide for remediation of students who were adversely affected by segregation in the Cleveland Public Schools;

I. To regain community confidence in the Cleveland Public Schools and its standards; and

J. To re-establish standards for teachers and students.

It should be noted in considering these major reasons that over 40 states have already implemented competency testing. The most successful program, as has been indicated, is in Portland, Oregon. Where competency tests have been implemented well, improved achievement in basic skills has resulted. Such improvement can be measured by standardized tests of achievement.

In June 1981, the Ohio State Department of Education published a pamphlet, Mission of the 80's: The Pursuit of Excellence, which identified thirteen action steps that were needed to improve Ohio schools. One of these

tasks is the improvement of pupil achievement. Related to this task is the commitment of the State to provide leadership to school districts in developing and implementing locally-designed intervention and competency testing programs. Subsequent approval of revised Standards for Schools by the State Board of Education in December 1982 put into effect a requirement for all Ohio school district to have competency testing in operation by September 1982 together with appropriate intervention and remediation to the extent funds can be made available.

Research on the characteristics of effective schools by Edmonds and others has shown that schools with well-defined goals and objectives shared by staff, students and community together with some additional elements were more effective in terms of students' performance on national testing programs regardless of their race or socioeconomic circumstances. This outcome is a major goals for the Cleveland Public Schools.

With respect to compliance with the Remedial order of the United States District Court, implementation of an effective competency testing program will improve the district's focus on students needs in reading. Additionally, the district will be utilizing non-discriminatory testing procedures, achieving a commonality in requirements for reading skills for all students in place of differentiated requirements common to tracking and addressing indicators established for the staff development activities in competency testing. As indicated, activities associated with the installation of a competency testing program will fulfill the district's requirements under the affirmative reading, testing and tracking (ability grouping) and staff development program in human relations components which have been submitted to the United States District Court.

In encouraging parental involvement in the schools, the school district will also be addressing another requirement of the Remedial Order related to increased parent and community involvement in the schools.

Without strategies and plans to report and involve parents and community members, which are necessary components of a well designed and implemented testing program, the competency testing program will not be appropriate, effective or legal. Involvement of the Business Sector in the competency program should facilitate communication between the school district and businesses about practical and desirable performance standards for employable personnel. The schools and businesses should improve their understandings as well as methods to develop students' capabilities.

As a result of development of competency tests, the reading curriculum will be supported by a consensus of teachers and parents. No longer will schools seek their own versions of what should be taught in a particular grade. Parents will be informed about the requirements in a particular grade. Standards will be uniformly applied with the effect that discriminatory actions in limiting instruction or lowering standards will be immediately discernible.

Remediation of students who do not achieve mastery will be required. The school district will have to devise supportive services both within and without the classroom. Remediation should be made available through summer school classes so that every opportunity is provided to students who do not achieve mastery and face grade retention.

Because a competency test has as a major goal improved achievement at all grades, implementation of the test should begin to result in greater community acceptance of the district's educational program and its graduates as competent persons. The requirement for mastery of 9th grade reading objectives by all regular student could become a part of the requirements for graduation from the Cleveland Public Schools. No decision by the Board of Education has been made at this time to require this. Currently, only

State minimum standards are required from graduation from the Cleveland Public Schools. State minimum standards are inadequate for ensuring that students are to be competitive in post-secondary training program and the world of work. Many of our graduates learned that this is true. Some school districts that have mandated 12th grade reading programs for graduation have experienced legal problems which all districts would rather avoid. If a 9th grade level is required, the least able graduate in the school district would have to read as well as a 9th grade student. The chance that average and above average students would read well enough to compete in the adult world of training and work would be significantly enhanced. Placement of a graduation requirement at the 9th grade level would provide optimum opportunity for students who do not pass the test to participate in remediation programs. A 9th grade reading level requirement for graduation would initiate a process that would begin to provide credibility for a diploma issued by the Cleveland Public Schools.

The recommended plan incorporating the 9th grade reading level requirement would have the following dimensions:

A. A 9th grade student will take the reading competency test. If successful, the student would have completed one of the requirements for graduation.

B. A 9th grade student would take the reading competency test but be unsuccessful in attaining mastery of 90% of the reading objectives. This student would then be eligible for planned remediation to ensure that he/she would read at the ninth grade level as a minimum. Unsuccessful students would be given the opportunity to take the test as many times as necessary in order to pass in grades 10 through 12. Prior to being retested, students would be required to participate in a remediation program.

C. Due to State standards requiring the earning of credits for graduation and successful promotion to each ensuing grade from grades 9 to 12, students earning such credit would progress from grade to grade. However, graduation would not be permitted without the competency test sanction.

Finally, through the competency testing program standards would be re-established in the learning environment for students and teachers for achievement, attendance and behavior. The very nature of such a testing program is the setting of specific standards of performance (learning) for students in a given grade and subject. Standards for students cannot be set without standards being set for teachers. The program would provide the opportunity to communicate the requirements to all students, teachers and parents. It would be the vehicle for renewing and reforming current requirements in the school district for learning and teaching.

What are the Major Elements of a Reading Competency Testing Program?

Major elements of a reading competency testing program include certain basic activities, many required under the State of Ohio Minimum Standards and others arising out of the school district's efforts to comply with the Remedial Order for desegregation.

A. Parent/community involvement must be achieved in this program. The Board of Education and district and school administrators must plan, design and implement appropriate phase-in procedures to inform parents the community about the program.

B. Teacher involvement must be generated through the development of reading objectives for each grade level and the design of the test to match such objectives required in each grade.

C. Communication of mastery levels by the Board of Education through its administrators to the community.

D. Provision of appropriate remediation for students who do not master the required number of reading objectives for their respective grades will require re-organization of present resources and the identification of new resources for the schools.

E. Technical assistance should be provided to ensure that the tests are valid and reliable and that tests do not perpetuate racial/sexual discriminatory practices.

F. Establishment of failure sanctions approved by the Board of will highlight the return to meaningful standards for the

educational programming.

G. Student/parent reports providing information about how each participating student performed in relation to the reading objectives for the grade.

H. Appropriate test try-out will be necessary given the type of design that is utilized for helping to establish the required level of mastery and to determine the technical accuracy of the test questions.

As has been indicated previously, the May 1982 pilot testing of a commercially available criterion-referenced reading test, the SOBAR which is published by the Science Research Associates, to students in grades 1 to 9 revealed that the city-wide student level of mastery appeared to be 60% of the reading objectives being mastered by 90% of the students in those grades. This pilot test which was implemented without failure penalties provided principals and teachers with experience in administration of the tests, interpretation of results for each students and analysis of strengths and weaknesses of performance across an array of nationally recognized end-of-year reading objectives. Parents and students also gained experience by receiving individual reports of where students stood in mastery of these reading objectives specified for their grades.

Who Will be Involved in the Program?

There will be seven audiences for this program:

A. Students, who will master objectives and participate in remediation where and when needed to improve their achievement;

B. Teachers, who will write and approve teaching objectives, administer the test, analyze results and re-teach students who require it.

C. Parents, who will be notified of students' successes/failures in each grade level objective so that they can help and support students in receiving remediation;

D. Board of Education members, who will have valid data about students' progress in reading in Cleveland schools;

E. Community members, who will give advice about various aspects of the program--performance levels for mastery, test participants and test content;

F. State Board of Education members, who will see the impact of the program on improvement of standards and student performance in reading, mathematics and writing by September 1984; and

G. United States District Court and its designees, who will receive information about fulfillment of three of the educational components of the Remedial Order--Affirmative reading program, testing and tracking practices and staff development achievements.

What do Teachers Do?

In a Competency Test teachers do the following:

A. Write the instructional objectives

B. Assess each instructional objective on the following issues:

1. Is it important to teach in your grade?

2. Do you have materials to teach it?

3. Do you know methods to teach it?

4. Did you teach it last year?

5. Can you teach it to 9 out of 10 of your students by the time the test would be administered?

C. Write test questions to match the instructional objectives.

D. Teach the instructional objectives.

E. Administer the competency test.

F. Diagnoses student difficulties.

G. Plan, design and implement appropriate intervention and remediation procedures.

What is the Progress Thus Far?

As of this date, the school district has--

A. Administered a pilot competency test (SOBAR) SRA, commercially prepared, to all 1-9 students in May 1982.

B. Developed instructional objectives in July 1982 through work of a select group of teachers from the Cleveland Public Schools, under the direction of a consultant.

C. Inserviced administrative/supervisory, cluster staff and principals--organizing cluster staff to inservice faculties and staffs on request in September and October 1982.

D. Initiated informational meetings in October 1982 for the community, parents and staff who will continue to be inserviced until the Competency Test is given to students in the Spring of 1984.

E. Provided for assessment of the instructional objectives by classroom teachers and teachers of reading.

F. Planned for teachers to write test questions in January 1983.

G. Planned for Pilot Test in May 1983.

The Test

Commercially prepared testing programs exist. In May 1982, the federal government under ESAA, Emergency School Assistance Act, provided the Cleveland Public Schools with $156,000 to initiate a Competency Testing program as a part of the affirmative reading skills program. This data has served as a basis for constructing the district's own test.

Research on competency testing programs suggests that tests designed, developed and implemented by local communities tend to stimulate improved achievement better than commercially prepared tests. However, districts must provide for analysis of technical features of the tests that are locally developed to ensure that the locally developed tests are valid and reliable. The school district began this process in the Summer of 1982.

The first step in the process of developing the test is to have the teachers write the instructional or teaching objectives to be taught at each grade level. This was started with the help of consultants.

The consultant firm that has been working with the administrators of the Cleveland Public Schools since the Summer of 1982 on Competency Testing is Policy Studies in Education, Inc., represented by Dr. Henry Brickell and Ms. Regina Paul.

The teachers who worked during the summer of 1982 generated the following sets of reading objectives for grades 1 through 9:

47	objectives for grade 1	30	objectives for grade 6
55	objectives for grade 2	33	objectives for grade 7
52	objectives for grade 3	33	objectives for grade 8
41	objectives for grade 4	27	objectives for grade 9
28	objectives for grade 5		

The Consultants edited the teaching goals or objectives prepared by approximately 30 teachers for technical accuracy and correct grade level placement. During the second week of October 1982, all teachers of reading in the district from grade 1 to 9 were asked to review the objectives for their grade level and respond to 5 important questions for each objective.

	Circle One	
1. Is it important to teach in your grade?	Yes	No
2. Do you have materials to teach it?	Yes	No
3. Do you know methods to teach it?	Yes	No
4. Did you teach it last year?	Yes	No
5. Can you teach it to 9 out of 10 of 10 of your students by May 15, 1983?	Yes	No

Approximately 700 teachers out of 1,400 returned the surveys.

When these objectives are finally approved and edited by teachers, consultants and supervisors, they will form the basis of a non-discriminatory curriculum in reading for the Cleveland Public Schools.

Remediation

For students who fail the Competency Test, the school district must provide the appropriate support and remediation program.

The acceptable performance level for the test (passing) determines the scope, magnitude and procedures necessary to ensure student success

on the test.

Inadequate remediation procedures have stimulated Court action in the past.

Responsibilities

The Board of Education is responsible for providing the needed funds for implementing the remediation program for the competency test.

The Superintendent and staff are responsible for plans, programs and procedures for implementing the remediation program.

Students who fail the competency test are responsible for attending the remediation program and learning the teaching goals in reading that they did not know on the previous test.

Parents are responsible for helping their children learn the objectives and/or insuring their child's participation in the remediation program.

What are the Problems?

(1) Remediation cost money.

The amount of money is determined by the "acceptable performance level" used for the level of mastering on the test.

For example:

If the level of performance decided is "90% of all the regular students in the district will master 90% of all the objectives for reading at their grade level," that will still leave 10% of the students who would need help. (Th consultant has recommended the "90% level for students and objectives.)

In 1982, the district had approximately 55,500 regular students in grades 1-9. If 10% require remediation, 5,500 students would need remediation.

Funds would be needed to help that many children. This is a Board of Education responsibility in cooperation with the administrative staff, which will recommend procedures, program and strategies for remediation.

What will be the Nature and Scope of the Remediation?

Will there be programs during school? after school? during the summer? night school for high school students? What kind of different strategies will be used to insure student success the second time around? How will parents be involved?

Results from the May 1982 commercially prepared reading criterion-referenced test (SOBAR) that was administered to all Cleveland students in the district--demonstrated that 90% of the students could master only 60% of the objectives on which the test was based. (This test used reading objectives recommended by nationally recognized consultants.)

It is this gap in achievement outcomes for students in Cleveland that the Competency Testing program is trying to change.

The goal: - 90% of all regular students will achieve 90% or more of the grade level teaching goals in reading.

What is the Present Status of the District Performance?

Ninety percent (90%) of all regular students achieved only 60% or more of the grade level national teaching goals in reading on the May 1982 pilot test. This suggests that roughly 22,500 or 50% of the students need to be involved in some kind of remedial program in order to meet the recommended goal of 90% of the students achieving 90% or more of the teaching goals.

It is true that as of October 1982, teachers had in their hands both the proposed instructional or teaching goals that the test would be using and the results of the May 1982 pilot test. The May 1982 pilot test provided information on each objective for each cluster, building and child.

Teachers can begin to try to make changes as of October 1982, in the reading achievement of students.

However, the number of students, 22,500, that appear to need help in meeting the proposed objectives, suggests district-wide plans to help all students improve. This plan could incorporate an emerging performance level goal such as:

In 1984 - 90% of all regular students must achieve 70% of all the teaching objectives in reading. A district-wide developmental and remediation plan would service students as a part of the regular school day.

In 1985 - 90% of all regular students must achieve 80% of all teaching objectives in reading. A district-wide developmental and remediation plan would service students as a part of the regular school day.

In 1986 - 90% of all regular students achieve 90% or more of the teaching goals in reading. Specialized plans for the remediation of the 10% of the population who needs help in order to master the teaching goals in reading would be implemented.

With this kind of plan in 1984 and 1985, the remediation program would have a minimal cost because it would be a part of the regular school day. In 1986, the Board of Education would have to provide funds for specialized programs for the 10% of the students needing help such as (1) summer school; (2) after school; (3) special staff and material to

help children during the school day (4) other educational strategies of merit.

Nothing has been decided on the kind, scope or magnitude of the remediation procedures, yet. However, it is a major piece of any competency testing program.

Do you have any ideas?

Why is the Cleveland Competency Test in Reading for Regular Students?

The receipt of categorical funds, meaning funds designated for special students only, has made most districts plan for special populations of students such as, EMR, LD, handicapped, Bilingual, LAU, etc.

Regular students generally do not qu lify for these specially planned programs to assist students in their achievement.

The Cleveland Competency Test in Reading is designed to improve the basic skills of regular students. However, it is recommended that any special student who wishes to participate in the program be allowed to do so with parental consent.

Why are Grades 1 Through 9 the Only Grades Involved in the Competency Testing Program?

Research and experience in the field suggests that where competency testing programs have been effective they have tested only the basic skills, i.e., reading, writing and arithmetic. These subjects are taught in grades 1 through 8.

The recommendation regarding competency testing in Cleveland is to design and implement the Cleveland Competency Test in Reading by September 1983, the Cleveland Competency Test in Arithmetic by September 1984 and the Cleveland Competency Test in Writing by September 1985.

Requirement for Graduation

Failure to pass the Competency Test in grade 1 through 8 will

result in diagnosis of difficulty, remediation and/or grade failure.

It is recommended that a requirement for graduation in June 1987--be passing the 9th grade Competency Test in Reading. State Law does not permit retention in grade 9 for not passing the test, if students have earned their required 60 points or 3 units.

Under the Cleveland plan, what could happen to ninth graders who do not pass the ninth grade competency test?

A. if students passed the 9th grade Competency Test in Reading, they have successfully completed one of the requirements for graduation.

B. Students, who do not master the 9th grade Competency Test in grade 9, must participate in the remediation program and re-take the test.

C. Students can participate in the remediation plans and re-take the test as many times as necessary between grades 9 and 12.

How will student success on the test be recognized?

A. Retention of diploma until test is passed, or;

B. Receipt of a certificate, or;

C. Written on transcript, or;

D. Issue two different kinds of diplomas, or;

E. Other means.

Why is this recommendation being considered?

The problem is how do we re-establish credibility in a Cleveland Public School diploma? How do we regain the community's confidence in our graduates' ability to perform?

One way is to re-establish standards. The district has begun the process by establishing the following standards.

Standard A: 1982-83 - Attendance

. 86% attendance is required in school in order to be considered for a grade in a class.

Standard B: 1983-84 - Competency Test in Reading

. Students in grade 1 through 8 must pass the Competency Test in Reading in order to be promoted.

Standard C: 1986-87 - Graduation Requirement

. Graduating seniors must pass the 9th grade Competency Test in Reading in order to graduate.

The decisions regarding penalties for failure to pass the Competency Test are still under discussion. What would you recommend?

How does a Competency Test Work?

A Competency Test identifies specific skills mastered or not mastered by a given student.

This kind of detailed data allows a teacher, a group of teachers, and/or, a district to identify teaching goals needed to improve achievement in a student, a school or the district.

What did the May 1982 pilot test, SOBAR Criterion-Referenced Measurement System, indicate about the Cleveland Public Schools' students in terms of reading?

(NOTE:
In order to obtain mastery on an objective a student had to answer three out of three questions on the test. Therefore, 90% mastery of an objective means that 90% of the students at that grade had mastered that objective.)

The city-wide performance on this national commercially prepared test was as follows:

Grade 1: - 90% of the students in Cleveland could do 10 out of 28 objectives at the 90% level.

These objectives were the following.

The learner can identify:

. oral words with initial single consonants
W,D,S/F,D,M/J,R,H/N,V,L/Y,K,G,/T,P,K

. oral words with final consonants
N,B,T/K,M,D

. oral words with initial consonants digraph and picture

. oral story with illustration of implied idea

Grade 2: - 90% of the students in Cleveland could do 11 out of 30 objectives at the 90% level.

The learner will identify:

. oral words with initial consonant blends--
ST,SK,SL,BL,BR,PL/CL,CR,CE/GR,PA,TR

. oral words with initial consonant diagraph
WH,CH,SH

. oral words with short vowels - A,E,O

. oral words with long vowels - A,O,I

. oral words with long vowels - E,I,U

. oral story with illustration of implied idea

. compound words from a set of words

. oral words to identify number of syllables

Grade 3: - 90% of the students could do 3 out of 34 objectives at the 90% level.

The learner will identify:

. oral words with final consonants combination--
SB,CH,TH

. oral words with long vowels - A,O,I

. oral words to identify number of syllables

Grade 4: - 90% of the students in Cleveland could do 3 out of 33 objectives at 90% level.

The learner will identify:

. oral word with vowel combination--
AY,EE,OO/UE,EY,AW/OY,OU

Grade 5: - 90% of the students in Cleveland could do 2 out of 30 objectives at the 90% level.

The learner will identify:

. prefix of a prefixed word

. page references for topic in index

Grade 6: - 90% of the students in Cleveland could do 2 out of 35 objectives at the 90% level.

The learner will identify:

. the meaning of prefixed word in a sentence

. words with the same pronunciation as a homonym

Grade 7: - 90% of the students in Cleveland could do 2 out of 32 objectives at the 90% level.

The learner will identify:

. the meaning of prefixed words in a sentence

. the meaning of a metaphor in a sentence

Grade 8: - 90% of the students in Cleveland could do 1 out of 32 objectives at the 90% level.

The learner will identify:

. the meaning of a metaphor in a sentence

Grade 9: - 90% of the students in Cleveland could do 1 out of 33 objectives at the 90% level.

The learner will identify:

. the meaning of personification in a sentence.

What will be Reported to Parents?

One part of a Competency Testing program is a reporting system to parents. This system serves two purposes. It is a contact between the home and the school on what is expected of students and teachers in schools. In addition, after each test is administered parents will receive a detailed report on how a child has performed on each instructional or teaching goal. This report will also indicate the level of mastery (pass or fail) on the test.

For students who do not master--or fail the test, an additional set of instructions will be mailed to parents regarding the remediation programs on how students can prepare for a second testing experience.

What Was The Least Able Performance By Cleveland Students On The May 1982 Pilot Test?

Number of objectives mastered by less than 60% of the students in a grade level.

7	grade 1 with 28 objectives	13	grade 6 with 35 objectives
2	grade 2 with 30 objectives	17	grade 7 with 32 objectives
1	grade 3 with 34 objectives	23	grade 8 with 35 objectives
7	grade 4 with 33 objectives	15	grade 9 with 33 objectives
13	grade 5 with 30 objectives		

CODE	GRADE 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	OBJECTIVES: The learner will identify:
PE3		X								Oral story to sequence illustration
PE8	X									Title of a reading selection
PE10	X									Details in a reading selection
PE11	X									Sequence major concepts in a reading selection
PE18	X									Emotions of characters in a reading selection
PD3	X	X								Synonyms for a word
PD4	X									Antonyms for a word
PD8	X									Word to complete sentence using context clues
1C2				X						Meaning of a compound word
1C7				X						Suffixed word from a set of words

CODE	GRADE 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	OBJECTIVES: The learner will identify:
1C27						X	X	X		Comparative form used correctly in a sentence
1C28						X				Superlative form used correctly in a sentence
1C31					X	X				Verb form used correctly in sentences
1C32					X	X				Verb for subject-verb agreement
1C42									X	Correct use of colon, semicolon, quotation marks
1C18			X							Irregular singular or plural nouns
1C25					X					Comparative form to complete a sentence
1C39					X					Syllabication of a word
1D1								X	X	Synonym for a word
1D2							X	X		Antonym for a word
1D3					X		X	X	X	Word pairs as synonyms, antonyms, neither
1D4								X		Words with the same pronunciation as a homonym
1D7						X		X		Meaning of unfamiliar word in context
1D8					X		X	X	X	Word to complete sentence using context clues
1D5									X	Meaning of a homonym in context
1E11								X		Paraphrase of a sentence
1E7					X		X			Main idea of a reading selection
1E9				X			X			Details in a reading selection

CODE	GRADE									OBJECTIVES: The learner will identify:
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
1E10					X			X		Sequence main events in a reading selection
1E12						X	X	X		A sentence that summarizes a reading selection
1E13				X			X			A conclusion based on a reading selection
1E15				X						Course and effort in a reading selection
1E16						X	X	X	X	Compare or contrast in a reading selection
1E17						X	X	X		Statements of opinion
1E18				X	X		X	X		Author's purpose in a reading selection
1E19								X	X	Author's opinion in a reading selection
1E20								X	X	Facts presented by author to support opinion
1E21									X	Question that cannot be answered from reading the selection
1E23								X		Setting, theme and mood of a fictional story
1E24								X	X	Questions based on a national science selection
1E25							X	X	X	Questions based on social studies selection
1F4					X					A word found on dictionary page with guide words
1F5							X	X	X	Definition of a word in context from dictionary page
1F6					X	X				Function of each part of dictionary entry
1F9						X	X	X		Correct pronunciation of a word using key
1F12					X	X	X		X	Key word to find topic in encyclopedia

CODE	GRADE									OBJECTIVES: The learner will identify:
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
1F13						X	X			Author, title or subject card of card catalog
1F15						X	X		X	Magazine article on topic using reader's guide
1F14								X		Author, title or call number of book
1F17					X	X				Page, chapter, or section of content page
1F22								X	X	Almanac, atlas, or thesaurus for a topic
1F27								X	X	Main topic, subtopic or sentence outline
1F23				X						Specific information on a map
Totals	7	2	1	7	13	13	17	23	15	